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Reagan's Summit Lesson

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV may think he's going to Geneva to discuss arms control, but he's wrong.

If he reads Ronald Reagan's U.N. speech very carefully, he will understand that in Geneva he will be enrolled in Ronald Reagan's "New Start" Academy. The curriculum is chosen. His major will be a three-day course in "How to Get Along With the U.S.A.," with a minor in a new course about cooperative solution of regional conflicts.

If he flunks either, he may not be allowed even to mention nuclear weapons.

If he brings up Star Wars, he will hear it defended in the words of one of his own predecessors, Alexei Kosygin.

If he suggests that the Soviets have a system that suits them, he will have Andrei Sakharov quoted to him to prove the opposite.

He will do well to pay strict attention to what he can do to solve the regional conflicts which are all of his doing.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity for the Soviet side to make a contribution to regional peace, which in turn, can promote future dialogue and negotiations on other critical issues," Reagan told him from the podium of the world forum.

Reagan wants the Soviets to cooperate in bringing about peace in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola and Nicaragua. We bring our people to the table; they bring theirs. While they are talking, we and the Soviets are putting our heads together on how to find peace.

The professor did not make it entirely clear how the new system will work.

Take Angola. The president says there are 1,200 Soviet military advisers and 35,000 Cuban troops there, propping up a wobbly Marxist regime. We are on the side of the rebels, the forces of UNITA, but due to the Clark Amendment, which outlawed the CIA activity we started there, we have been unable to bring about regional harmony.

Now that the Clark Amendment has been repealed, however, Republican conservatives are pressing for \$27 million in aid to the UNITA forces. Secretary of State George Shultz thought it might be a better idea to try to negotiate with the contending parties, which certainly seems to be in the spirit of Reagan's "new start" proposals, but is being excoriated by cold warriors who may have not caught up with the new cooperative approach.

Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), for instance, said that failure to fuel the fighting would send the wrong signal to the Soviet Union on the eve of the Geneva summit.

On the matter of Nicaragua, a regional peace process, organized by the Contadora countries, was sternly discouraged by the Reagan administration. Perhaps at Geneva, Prof. Reagan will explain to Gorbachev why. What we have done instead, at his insistence, is to send \$26 million to the contras who are trying to overthrow the government of President Daniel Ortega.

Bright as he is, Gorbachev may have trouble grasping the contradictions. It is a little difficult to see why regional peace processes which did not involve the Soviets were found wanting when our complaint in the first place was about Soviet intervention in the area.

But exploring the fine points will tell Reagan something about how Gorbachev's mind works and also stave off any uncongenial intrusion of nuclear weapons questions.

An arms treaty would be in any case a dubious blessing, we learn from the speech. The Soviets have violated previous treaties, the president said. And just this week, to dampen any flickering hopes that Reagan and Gorbachev might achieve accord, Defense

Secretary Caspar Weinberger charged that the Soviets were guilty of a new violation, the deployment of the SS-25.

If Gorbachev tries to bring up Star Wars, his professor will taunt him, as he did at the U.N. "How is Moscow threatened, if the capitals of other nations are protected? We do not ask that the Soviet leaders, whose country has suffered so much from war, leave their people defenseless against foreign attack. Why, then, do they insist that we remain undefended?"

If Gorbachev can answer those questions, he may be allowed to go to the head of the class of one.

What he has learned so far from Reagan's U.N. reading from the school catalogue is that Reagan will give him a passing mark and let him graduate to arms control only if he changes, shows signs of becoming an advocate of democracy and capitalism.

It is a lot to ask, but Reagan goes to Geneva in a position of strength. He stands at 68 percent approval rating among his own people — who, luckily for him, do not expect a summit agreement — and since he brought down a planeload of terrorists, could probably be elected president of the world. Gorbachev hoped to be treated as an equal at the summit. The U.N. speech put an end to that notion. Gorbachev is going to be treated like an errant schoolboy.